# Chapter 4 *Nutrition Education*

## Module 5: Measuring Success

### Step Up and Step Out to measure results!

## Why Measure Results?

Check the nutrition education component of the community review to help plan healthy eating and nutrition education actions. Use information from the community review to:

- ♥ Identify strengths and areas for development for nutrition education in the community and school(s)
- ♥ Determine a starting point by which to determine success
- ♥ Establish goals
- ♥ Check progress with achieving goals

## Measuring nutrition education and healthy eating

You may have noticed by now that examples given for nutrition education don't talk about how much vitamin this, or mineral that, or types of amino acids in particular foods! It's not that nutrients aren't important to our health, but we eat foods—not nutrients. Eating a balanced diet with a variety of foods will provide the nutrients we need. It is the skills and motivation needed to choose a balanced diet, rather than knowledge alone, which needs to be learned or reinforced!

CDC's *Guidelines for School Health Programs to Promote Healthy Eating* (1) reinforces this idea: "The primary goal of nutrition education should be to help young people adopt eating behaviors that will promote health and reduce risk for disease. Knowing how and why to eat healthily is important, but knowledge alone does not enable young people to adopt healthy eating behaviors."

# Measuring environmental change for healthy eating

The success of positive changes in eating behavior cannot be measured with standard true-false, or multiple choice tests alone.

Knowledge measures can be used, but to measure success of healthy eating changes consider the three types of actions that are used to promote healthy behavior

1. Changing the environment through increased opportunities, role models, and support
2. Enhancing knowledge and skills
3. Encouraging/rewarding healthy changes
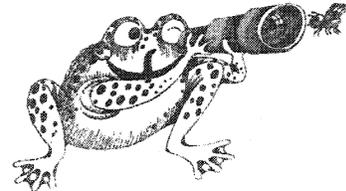
It is important to remember, when identifying measures of success, that the coalition can influence all three actions but isn't responsible for personal choices. Focus on measuring the number of opportunities that were created or improved, or problems that were resolved.

# Community measures

Measuring the results of community actions can be a little challenging. Participation in activities is often used, but remember the coalition can only impact the number of opportunities presented in the community, not individual choice for participation.

**Examples of measures:**

**Example 1:** The number of businesses that promote healthy work-site choices and/or the number of healthy work-site promotions within a business.

**Example 2:** The number of daycare centers promoting healthy eating choices.

**Example 3:** The number of community-based youth organizations that promote and model healthy eating choices.

**Example 4:** The number of businesses that promote healthy eating and/or the number of times per year they have promotions.

**Example 5:** The number of community events that promote healthy choices.

## School measures
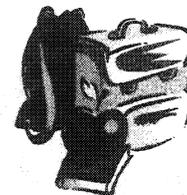
**More specific environmental actions the coalition might use to measure success in schools include:**

**Examples:**

1. An increase in the number of healthy food options at events or classroom parties
2. An increased number/frequency of role models
3. An increased number of posters and such things that encourage healthy choices
4. An increased number of articles/information provided to parents
5. An increased number of "wellness" opportunities provided to staff
6. An increased number of healthy eating/nutrition in-service sessions provided for staff

## Increased opportunities in curriculum might be measured by:

**Examples:**

1. An increased percentage of classes, school-wide, integrating nutrition education
2. The number of links formed in each class, i.e., with art, music, school lunch, and physical education
3. The number of times curriculum includes food taste tests
4. An increased number of resources readily available for teachers

## Changes in student behavior/skills might be measured by:

**Examples:**

1. Student ability to identify reasons to make healthy eating and physical activity choices
2. Student ability to identify foods high and low in fat
3. Student ability to use food labels to choose healthy foods
4. Student ability to identify healthy snacks
5. Student ability to plan and prepare healthy snacks

# Individual measures

In addition to creating environmental change, it is important for the coalition to encourage individual change. This increases the potential for a greater number of role models, and helps achieve the ultimate vision of healthy communities! Individuals increase their chance for healthy success when they create a simple plan and make goals measurable within a specified time period. Suggestions are presented here as a reminder to encourage personal efforts whenever possible!

**Examples:**

1. Keep track of food intake daily and compare it to the recommendations of the Food Guide Pyramid.
2. Keep track of time spent in activity each week and compare it to your goal.

# Problem-solving measures

Sometimes, measures of success are determined by how many of the "problems" that *prevent* success are eliminated!

The following factors are often overlooked as measures. When problems are not addressed, environmental change does not reach its full potential.

1. **Communication:** Are actions communicated to all that are involved in implementing the plan? Is there good awareness of the event, program, or action?
2. **Time:** Is there good timing with all that is going on in the community or surrounding the action? Is an event or program being held at the right time of the day, or day of the week?
3. **Location:** Is the program or event held in a location convenient to participants?
4. **Resources:** Is the action cost feasible and cost effective? Were there enough supplies, equipment or people available to initiate the action?
5. **Participation:** What factors may have contributed to the success/failure of the action. Were there too many other events/programs occurring at the same time?
6. **Overall:** Should the action be repeated? If it was a success, was it successful considering the resources used? If it was a failure, should revisions be made, and then the action be repeated?
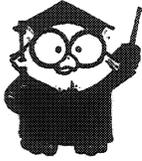
# References and Resources

(1)  Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. *Guidelines for School Health Programs to Promote Lifelong Healthy Eating*. CDC, Division of Adolescent and School Health, 4770 Buford Highway, Mailstop K-32, Atlanta, GA 30341-3717.  Phone:  770-488-3168. Available online:  www.cdc.gov/nccdphp/dash/nutguide.htm

## Module Tip:

When identifying measures of success, the coalition can influence but isn't responsible for personal choices.  Focus on measuring the number of opportunities that were created or improved or problems that were resolved.

## FAQs:

❑ **Question:** It seems a little overwhelming to have to keep track of all the actions and changes and then measure them when it feels like a success just to have eager volunteers.  What will make it a little less overwhelming?

**Answer:** Remember to delegate!  When you are setting up the coalition, it helps to identify a "task force" to collect information for measures.

# Nutrition Education Measures Checklist

**Check each of the following actions as they are completed.**

☐ Plan actions for nutrition education on the VMSOA plan using information indicated on the community review identified for each action.

☐ Develop measures for the actions planned above.

**Examples:**

**Action:** *Plan at least 3 taste testing activities per year in grades K-5.*

**Measure:** *Record and date each taste testing activity actually held in a year. Compare the total at the end of the year with the goal.*

**Action:** *Provide healthy snack choices at all extra-curricular school activities where snacks are offered.*

**Measure:** *Record the number of extra-curricular school activities in a year and indicate the times healthy snack choices were provided.*

**Action:** *Publish a minimum of 10 nutrition-related articles in the local newspaper by July 2005.*

**Measure:** *Record and date the number of nutrition-related articles published in a year. Compare the total at the end of the year with the goal.*

☐ Identify a person who will be responsible for collecting nutrition education action information.

**Person responsible:**_____

☐ Identify the methods that will be used for measuring/tracking information.

☐ Determine a schedule for reporting results to the coalition specified in the coalition's timeline.

☐ Include the reporting schedule in the coalition's timeline.

**Notes:**

# Component: Nutrition Education

**Examples of how measures are indicated**

| Nutrition Education Factors | Initial Status | Actions Planned | Results Demonstrated |
|---|---|---|---|
| 1. There is a nutrition education curriculum that incorporates concepts of the Food Guide Pyramid. The curriculum has written outcomes | ☐ Strength<br>☒ Develop<br>Date 6/05 | Example: *The coalition will form a committee to support changes b. will contact schools with existing comprehensive nutrition and physical activity programs to obtain resource examples by 7/05* | Specify # actions taken, changes, or comments<br><br>☐ In progress<br>Example of measures: *The number of schools contacted; if action results in specific guidelines used to implement the curriculum according to guidelines.* |
| 2. Nutrition education is integrated into core subjects in the classroom. Consider how often integration occurs | ☐ Strength<br>☒ Develop<br>Date 6/05 | Example: *The coalition committee will include the curriculum director and at least one teacher to identify current practices by 8/05* | ☐ In progress<br>Example of measures: *Initially, the number of teacher contacts made to identify practices. After action is implemented; An increase in the number of times curriculum is integrated in other subjects* |
| 3. Nutrition education lessons are fun and participatory, teaching food choice skills along with knowledge | ☐ Strength<br>☒ Develop<br>Date 6/05 | *See above* | ☐ In progress |
| 4. Nutrition education lessons are linked to school lunch to create student awareness of healthy choices in their school environment | ☐ Strength<br>☒ Develop<br>Date 6/05 | Example: *School meals offers great theme days at present, but the coalition will develop links to the classroom by 10/05* | ☐ In progress<br>Example of measures: *The number of links created* |
| 5. Food tasting is used in the classroom to allow students to experience a variety of foods and develop positive attitudes in a supportive environment | ☐ Strength<br>☒ Develop<br>Date 6/05 | Example: *Several teachers currently used food tasting, the coalition will contact those teachers to enlist support in motivating other teachers; enlist support from administration for funding and encouragement; enlist support from the food service staff for supplies by 10/05* | ☐ In progress<br>Example of measures: *An increase number of times food is tasted in a particular classroom; an increase in the number of classrooms that included food taste testing.* |
| 6. When snacks are available in the classroom, they include healthy choices | ☒ Strength<br>☐ Develop<br>Date 6/05 | Example: *A policy already exists that teachers will send a note to parents giving options for healthy snacks in the classroom. The coalition will continue to support this policy.* | ☐ In progress |

| Nutrition Education Factors | Initial Status | Actions Planned | Results demonstrated Specify # actions taken, changes, or comments |
|---|---|---|---|
| 7. Parents receive information regarding healthy choices, i.e., letters, newsletters, and surveys, to increase skills, knowledge, and allow feedback | ☐ Strength<br>☒ Develop<br><br>Date 6/05 | Example: *Identify resources and distribute parent information by 12/05* | ☐ In progress<br>Example of measures: *The number of resources identified; the number of resources distributed; the number of parent feedback resulting from distribution* |
| 8. Parents and community are actively involved in classroom nutrition education, i.e., with interactive homework, field trips, guest speakers, and classroom volunteers | ☐ Strength<br>☒ Develop<br><br>Date 6/05 | Example: *Promote healthy eating and physical activity and have a parent volunteer sign-up sheet at the back-to-school open house* | ☐ In progress<br>Example of measures: *The number of parents who sign-up to volunteer; the number of times parents participate in classroom activities. Long-term: the number of years the activity is sustained* |
| 9. School staff model personal healthy eating and physical activity choices | ☐ Strength<br>☒ Develop<br><br>Date 6/05 | Example: *Involve teachers in planning new school wellness program and provide incentives for participation* | ☐ In progress<br>Examples of measures: *The number of opportunities offered to involve teachers and the number of incentives offered. The number of modeling examples participants provide.* |
| 10. Administration supports the above factors | ☐ Strength<br>☒ Develop<br><br>Date 6/05 | Example: *Meet with the school principal to determine what resources/awareness are needed* | ☐ In progress<br>Examples of measures: *The number of action steps towards meeting goals following meeting with administrators* |
| Other (please specify) | ☐ Strength<br>☒ Develop<br><br>Date 6/05 | Example: *The coalition will personally recognize and thank teachers for their efforts* | ☐ In progress<br>Example of measures: *The number and frequency of recognitions given.* |